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NOTES AND ABSTRACTS.

The Influence of Social Habits on the Spirit of Initiative.—The idea that the spirit of initiative is dying out in France is widespread. Although it may have been somewhat exaggerated, there are justifiable grounds for the belief. We shall consider the causes at work in the nineteenth century which have opposed the spirit of initiative. No one can doubt that the kind of life, the occupation, the means of employing the time, and the customs which control the establishment and development of the family have a strong influence over personal effort. It will, therefore, not be useless to attempt to determine the relations existing between the social habits and the spirit of initiative. The subject will be discussed under two divisions: (1) the family; (2) the method of gaining a livelihood or the occupation.

1. *The family.*—The family is the principal factor in the formation of social habits. In the family the child receives the most permanent and efficient motives of life. The conception of the parents as to the kind of life the child should lead and the ends it should attain has a decisive influence in favoring or suppressing the spirit of initiative. If there existed the custom that the young people in entering upon marriage would be compelled to depend upon their own resources for their living, it would act as an incentive to independent activity and initiative. But the young Frenchman is confronted by no such problems. Custom and law assure to him a part of the family fortune. This he anticipates on the day of his marriage, not only in the form of the dowry, but also in that of an annuity. It would never occur to a French family to reduce a young man to those pecuniary resources which he can supply for himself. Such customs, far from stimulating a young man to take up an occupation where he may be able to make for himself a bright future, lead him to pursue for several years those studies which allow much leisure, and finally he takes up some very mediocre position. From early childhood the children see the efforts which their parents make to remove for them every necessity of personal effort and to make their pathway entirely smooth. It is the ambition of most parents that their children may have an occupation in which the cares and responsibilities of life may be avoided to the largest possible extent, such as employment under the government, in the army, and in administration, the whole tendency being to kill every desire for personal effort. Many of the sons of rich business-men and of the aristocracy are utterly incapable of filling a useful position, and squander in vulgar pleasures the fortunes of their parents, acquired by work and intelligence. If a young man should escape these influences and desire to make a place for himself in a foreign country, he meets with the resistance of the love of his parents, especially that of his mother. The force of the bonds attaching parents to children in France is very great, and we are not attacking this tie; but the perversion of it that kills the initiative of the young man is disastrous. Many very capable young men are induced to remain in Paris on a meager salary, when they know that they could earn many times as much in America or Africa, simply because their parents fear they will not be cared for so well there as at home. It is this egoistic affection of the parents which causes many young men to vegetate in mediocrity, kills all initiative and independence, and deprives our commerce and industry and our colonies of the better elements in development and prosperity.

The same influence which directs the sons toward government careers leads the parents to desire a government officer for a son-in-law. There is a feeling against the young men in commercial and industrial occupations, and young women are not willing to leave the large cities of France or accept a marriage that involves any cares or responsibilities. The habits in regard to both choice of an occupation and to marriage are opposed to the spirit of initiative.

In addition to these obstacles to initiative may be mentioned those of the marriage relation in France. It no longer furnishes the strong motive that it naturally

should in industry and general progress. The marriage relation has lost much of its dignity and high value, and in the increasing sterility of marriages is found one of the greatest causes of stagnation in commerce and industry.

2. *The method of gaining a livelihood or the occupation.*—With the exception of government officials and soldiers, there are very few Frenchmen in the French colonies. The French do not profit from their colonies, because their people are too closely attached to the mother-country. Their lack of adventure and of a desire for colonial undertakings is due to the nature of their patriotism. The natural resources of the country, its fine climate, the varied fertility of the soil, and the pleasant social relations are some of the causes which hold them to the motherland and make them consider emigration as a sad event in life, while it is emigration which is chiefly sought by the Anglo-Saxon and seems to be the normal and happy consequence of his whole existence.

This attachment of the French to their native soil should be noted, for it is one of the important causes of their lack of national expansion. It has its good side, and is an element of strength, but its influence has been exaggerated. One of the causes of this attachment is the wide diffusion of the means for comfortable existence at home. Saving is a national virtue, few marriages are contracted without the dowry, younger sons are not discriminated against in inheritance, as in England, the families are not large, as in Germany, and wealth is distributed among all classes. In addition to the help received by inheritance, which in general is not large, attention should be given to the national habit of saving as another means of keeping the people at home. It soon brings them sufficient capital to enable them to be contented with a small income and to lead the idle life of the independent. It is not necessary to combat their habit of saving, but that which is deplorable is their exaggerated love of a life exempt from hard work and close application. This excessive desire for repose and the lack of ambition are very reprehensible social habits, and are due in large measure to their education, to legislation, and also to the economic conditions in France in the last century. In this respect the difference between the French and the English is very great. The English push effort and enterprise almost to excess and seek the occupations in which gain is large. The Frenchman, without much ambition, an enemy of effort, contenting himself with little, of modest tastes, defended against need by a small number of desires and by a small fortune resulting from inheritance and saving, will choose a career in which pecuniary profits are small, but which offers quietude, security, and especially the allurements of a retiring pension. The occupations most sought in fulfilment of such tastes are those of an employee of the public offices. A large number of the *bourgeoisie*, attracted by the prospect of an assured salary and a retiring pension, enter the service of the state and find a satisfaction of their tendencies there, the number of public offices having been greatly increased during the nineteenth century. Moreover, the industrial evolution of the last century, characterized by invention, by prodigious development of railroads, and by great organization of business under the form of limited joint-stock companies, has extended still farther the taste and search on the part of the *bourgeoisie* for places as employees and officials. These bureaucratic positions and the employments with a fixed salary and a limited responsibility, sought by the majority of the nation, because of habits and tendencies contrary to the spirit of initiative, are themselves destructive of this spirit and of personal effort. Unfortunately the habit of indecision and carelessness contracted in these occupations becomes the predominant note of life. If this lack of initiative were confined to the employment it would not be so bad, but in the personal interest and in the part which individuals play in public affairs this lack of initiative is manifested. The influence of the mode of employment creates by habit a second nature, it develops or atrophies the natural qualities, and it is certain that one of the principal obstacles to the spirit of all initiative in France, after the system of education, is found in the manner in which most of the French are occupied.—CHARLES HARDY, "De l'influence des habitudes sociales sur l'esprit d'initiative," in *La réforme sociale*, November, 1902.

E. M.

The Concept of Society.—The word "society" implies the idea of a complex unity, of an *ensemble* of beings united by a band and by a tie of which they are con-

scious, at least to some degree. When these beings are human beings, which is by far the most interesting case for us, whence comes that tie? It is found by a certain similarity, more or less narrow, (1) of habitat; (2) of race; (3) of education and language; (4) of occupations (by the division of labor, the tasks of the different members of a society are very various, but they co-operate for the accomplishment of a great collective work: there is a co-ordination rather than a similarity of occupations); (5) of domestic life; (6) of moral, religious, æsthetic, and technical conceptions and practices; (7) of legal and political government.

All these likenesses cannot date from today; they must have had some duration; they should mark by a certain impress the associating members; they should have established among them the tie of a common tradition. This indication suffices to point out that one should know not to speak, all the time at least, of a human society in general, of a *societas humani generis*. For humanity never recognizes itself and has not up to the present time felt itself one. The human species is then only an anthropological expression. Sociologically speaking, its cohesion does not exist.

One comes to see that in order to find society it is necessary to divide the human genus into nations. But does that suffice? Should the true social unity be something yet more limited than the nation?

To that question there is perhaps no general response to make. We are led to believe that in ordinary cases it should be answered in the negative. Some nations, like France, England, Italy, the United States, each form only one society. For in each of these the members are considered as fellow-citizens, as belonging to the same fundamental collectivity, and that is the criterion, subjective no doubt, but on the whole precise, which permits recognition of the existence of a society. The question becomes more doubtful for a country like Germany, where the particularistic spirit has remained very long-lived in certain states of the confederation. It is especially so for Austria, where differences of race, of language, of culture, are so apparent between the parts of the monarchy. We should not hesitate to say that Hungary constitutes one society distinct from that of Austria properly speaking.

The temptation to subdivide is so strong for some investigators that they willingly make societies out of the smallest human groupings. Without doubt there is a harmony more intimate between the members of small groups than between them and the remainder of their fellow-citizens. But it must not be forgotten that the tie which unites these groups has only a special object, while the tie which forms true society has a general object. Society is a collective unity of which the existence is necessary to the maintenance of individual lives. And that unity, at present, is a whole nation.

The limits of society should not in principle be more restricted than those of the corresponding state. But may they not be larger? Might it not be said that there are some societies which exceed the boundaries of states? It can be maintained, for example, that, notwithstanding the political partition of the ancient kingdom of Poland between Russia, Austria, and Prussia, there continues only one Polish society, extending on the territories of these three states and still holding together the disjointed members of that ancient nationality. Of the seven characteristics which we have before recognized as constituting the social tie, the first six exist between all the Poles. But we should be careful to note that the social unity maintains itself here because the remembrance of political unity has not perished and the expectation of its reconstitution has not disappeared. There exist some associations diffused throughout the Occident, and occasionally obedient to a rigorous discipline, the monastic orders, for example. Their unity of thought has not made them true societies. For they know they are not sufficient of themselves.

From the discussions which precede it follows that society is constituted by a nation politically organized; that it corresponds to a state. That is not to say, however, that there is a synonymy between these terms. Four words are employed often enough the one for the other — "people," "nation," "society," "state." The terms "people" and "nation" designate a group looked at in its structure. The terms "society" and "state" designate it when it is looked at in its functioning. It is the difference between the anatomical and physiological points of view.

The terms "people" and "society" are employed when the multiplicity of elements which make up the group is thought of, or the multiplicity of phenomena that its life presents. A "nation" is an ordered people; a "state" is a society disciplined

by a government and laws. The life is spontaneous in society. It has something of constraint in the state. Likewise people can be a dispersed multitude. The nation is a coherent mass. In the earlier stages of history, in primitive humanity or with the arrested types of present humanity, there are already peoples and societies; these are not known either as nations or as states.—RENÉ WORMS, in *Revue internationale de sociologie*, March, 1903. A. B.

Socialism in Japan.—The vigorous manner in which the police authorities recently prevented the holding of a gigantic labor meeting organized by the *Niroku Shimpō* has given rise to a considerable amount of journalistic criticism. Why the police took this apparently high-handed measure we do not know for certain, as no official explanation has been given. It is, however, suggested in more than one quarter that the police interfered with the *Niroku's* project because they had reason to suspect the promoters of the meeting of socialistic aims. This suggestion has an air of probability in view of the preponderance of avowed socialists among those who were to speak at a lecture meeting, which the disappointed projectors of the labor meeting proposed to hold afterwards, and which was also suppressed by the police. If this explanation be trustworthy, we should think that the police were extremely ill-advised in interfering with the carrying out of the *Niroku's* labor gathering and lecture meeting. If it was the socialistic bugbear that frightened the police into the summary procedure in question, we are inclined to believe that their excited fancy conjured up a danger which has no substantial existence. Socialistic doctrines have, it is true, found a lodgment in the section of the educated class, and their votaries appear to be increasing in number and importance. These doctrines occasionally find expression in the columns of the *Rōdō Sekai*, the *Niroku*, the *Yorozu* and a few other organs, as well as from the popular platform. With all this apparent practical vitality, we may safely state that socialism is in this country still in the stage of academic discussion, and that the day when it will assume practical significance is as yet, if such a day is ever to come, in the far distant future. So far as the mass of the people are concerned, they show as yet no sign of fundamental discontent with the present social order. This is so, not because they are less intelligent than people of the same class in the Occident, but because the conditions of life among us are such that there is little occasion for them to wish for any radical change in the social constitution. Happily or unhappily, according to the way in which the matter is looked at, the struggle for existence here has none of that sharp and unfeeling intensity which is calculated to engender in the breasts of its unfortunate victims in the West a deep and sullen hostility to the present order of things. Society here has, for centuries, been constructed on principles fundamentally different from those obtaining in the West. Our society is more communistic in its character than theirs, and we are more forbearing with, and helpful to, each other than the European peoples. It is true that, since the introduction of occidental civilization, great changes are taking place in our conditions of life, but amidst all these changes the fundamental characteristic of our social organization still remains intact, and is not likely to be fully effaced, although it will probably be modified more or less owing to the new influences at work. Under these circumstances, it seems to us that socialistic doctrines may spread among us and may possibly benefit us in various ways, but are not likely to lead to popular agitations of a character inimical to the public order and tranquility. If anything tends to promote the growth of such dangers, it may possibly be, it is to be feared, cases of unnecessary official interference like that under consideration.—*Japan Times*, April 8, 1903.